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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [UNMIK](#) [YI](#)
SUBJECT: KOSOVO: DETAILS OF SLKM PROPOSAL ON
DECENTRALIZATION

REF: PRISTINA 531

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¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Oliver Ivanovic views his Serbian List for Kosovo and Metohija (SLKM) plan for seven new Serb-majority municipalities and the enlargement of an eight existing municipality (Novo Brdo) as a bridge between the current proposals on new municipalities by the Serbian and Kosovo government negotiators. Ivanovic was not able to brief his proposal, as he had hoped, to Serbian and Kosovo government officials prior to July 19 decentralization talks in Vienna. The SLKM proposal does improve on the most recent proposal from Ahtisaari's team on Mitrovica, but it will be difficult to convince the Kosovo negotiating team to accept many of his proposals to divide existing towns and significantly enlarge the municipality of Novo Brdo by taking a large amount of contiguous territory from the neighboring municipalities of Gjilan and Kamenica. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) Oliver Ivanovic discussed his SLKM proposal (reftel) for seven new ethnic Serb majority municipalities with PolOffs on July 13. Although Ivanovic wanted to brief Serbian Prime Minister Kostunica and President Boris Tadic in Belgrade and then Kosovo Deputy Prime Minister Lutfi Haziri before the July 19 talks in Vienna on decentralization, he was unable to do so. According to Ivanovic, under his plan 85 percent of Serbs in Kosovo would live in a Serb majority municipality. The SLKM plan differs from that proposed by the office of UN Special Envoy for Kosovo (UNOSEK) Martti Ahtisaari in several key areas. UNOSEK wants to combine several majority Serb areas in and around Gracanica and Lipljan into one large municipality, while Ivanovic would prefer to see them as two separate majority-Serb municipalities. Ivanovic does not want the new municipality created in northern Mitrovica to be merged into the existing municipality of Zvecan as UNOSEK has proposed, but he does want it to include several Serb and Albanian villages north of the Ibar River that are included in the current unitary Mitrovica municipality. Ivanovic persists in asking for the

new Serb majority municipality of Priluzije composed of cadastral zones from the existing municipalities of Vushtrri and Obilic. There are also minor differences between the two plans in the number of cadastral zones in the proposed new municipalities of Ranilug, Partesh and Kllokot (referred to as "Vrbovac" in the SLKM proposal) as well as the number of cadastral zones from neighboring Gjilan and Kamenica that will be added to the enlarged majority Serb municipality of Novo Brdo.

13. (SBU) PolOff pressed Ivanovic to explain how many of his smaller proposed municipalities would have a sufficient economic base to support a new municipality. He replied that most of the local economies would be agriculture-based. He added that Gračanica is already a large town by Kosovo standards and has the monastery with its possibilities for tourism, while Lipjan has a bottling facility that he believes would employ Serb residents. Ivanovic similarly thinks that the ethnic Albanian owner of the now privatized mineral water bottling facility in Kllokot could also be "convinced" to employ local Serbs if a new Serb majority municipal is created there. Ivanovic said that the Government of Serbia would build/rehabilitate a transformer factory in his proposed municipality of Priluzje to employ local Serbs there.

14. (SBU) PolOff shared the SLKM proposal on July 14 with Clarisse Pasztory, senior political advisor on decentralization to Deputy Prime Minister (and the head of Kosovo's negotiating team on decentralization) Lutfi Haziri. Pasztory was uniformly negative on the proposal, particularly repeated efforts by Ivanovic at "ethnically engineering" Serb majority municipalities by dividing existing urban areas such as the towns of Lipjan, Gjilan and Kamenica by carving out their ethnic Serb inhabitants. She questioned the viability of the two smallest of his proposals -- Partesh and Kllokot

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with just under 5,000 inhabitants each. Pasztory would prefer that these Serb villages instead become sub-municipal units within the existing ethnic Albanian majority municipalities of Gjilan and Viti, respectively.

15. (SBU) Pasztory told PolOff that Deputy Prime Minister Haziri noted that the new municipalities proposed by Ivanovic correspond exactly to the areas where the SLKM members in the Kosovo Assembly live. She was adamant that the new municipality in northern Mitrovica be limited to the urban town and not include any surrounding villages and called the proposed municipality carved out of Obilic and Vushtrri a "land grab" for the lignite deposits and power station located there. She also took issue with Ivanovic's (and UNOSK's) proposals on expanding Novo Brdo. She believes neither take into account the physical topography of the region because both merge cadastral zones separated by mountains with no connecting roads.

16. (SBU) COMMENT: Although Ivanovic was not able to discuss his proposal with Serbian and Kosovo government officials prior to the July 19 meeting on decentralization in Vienna, he deserves credit for coming up with a thoughtful plan that he hoped would find a middle ground between them. His plan, however, creates a patchwork of nearly contiguous majority Serb municipalities of questionable sustainability, hardly something the Kosovo government will approve. By accepting new innocuous municipalities of Partesh and Kllokot, the Kosovo negotiating team has agreed to the least objectionable of Ivanovic's proposals, perhaps in the hope of turning off his other proposed municipalities. END COMMENT.

17. (U) U.S. Office Pristina clears this cable for release in its entirety to U.N. Special Envoy for Kosovo Martti Ahtisaari.
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